

# Native



# Prairie

## UPDATE

VOLUME 13 - WINTER 2002

### Hello Prairie Stewards!

We are in the midst of an exciting addition to the Native Prairie Stewardship Program. We are bringing in all of our "Streambank Stewards" to make one larger program, which will be called the "Prairie Stewardship Program". Up until now, we have operated the Native Prairie and Streambank stewardship programs somewhat separately. There have been over 150 demonstration projects set up with producers along streambanks (riparian areas) under the Streambank Stewardship Program. While most of these producers also have native prairie, they were not voluntary stewards in the Native Prairie Stewardship Program. And of course, many Native Prairie Stewards have creeks and wetlands that they are conserving as well. So we are currently modifying our sign to reflect the upland and riparian landscape, and we will offer the programs together. The only change to the Native Prairie Stewardship Program will be a shorter name, a slightly different sign, and a bit more information on riparian management in our newsletter!

Also of note, in our upcoming field season we will be offering an opportunity for anyone interested in harvesting native seed to borrow our small hand-held seed stripper and/or our pull-behind 4-foot stripper (works behind a small tractor or an ATV). The idea is to give a few people the chance to harvest seed for seeding back some of their own land to native species. Please call Jennifer at 787-8707 if you are interested! We will only be able to accommodate 3 to 5 people, as most of you will want to harvest at close to the same time, so call soon to get on the list!

We hope you enjoy this edition of the Prairie Update. If you have any questions about anything you read, don't hesitate to call, fax or email. We are always happy to hear from you!

P.S. There is another "exciting addition" coming soon, as I will be going on maternity leave in March! Jennifer Lohmeyer, whom many of you have met with or spoken with over the phone, will ably be taking on the stewardship programming. I'll catch up with you all next spring!

-Lesley Hall

## Cropland Conversion Part of Management Plan

by Doug Elsasser



Roland and Sue Bear

For Roland and Sue Bear, owning a cattle ranch near the Cypress Hills of southwestern Saskatchewan is a dream come true.

Together now for 13 years, the couple grew up in separate provinces but shared a background in beef cattle. Roland was raised on a mixed farm near Peguis, Manitoba; and Sue hails from Pincher Creek, Alberta where her family ranched in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains.

"We moved here a couple of years ago, and we actually bought the place last year, so we are just setting up," said Roland. Wanting to respect local heritage, the Bears have registered the "Quarter Circle L" ranch brand used by previous owners Dave and Nan Garven.

Roland and Sue are starting out with 800 acres of land and 35 bred cows. They also have shares in Knolly's Grazing Co-op, a nearby provincial community pasture, that will allow them to run 20 cow/calf pairs every summer. When he is not ranching, Roland works mornings as a special education teacher at Eastend School. Sue is employed by the Nature Conservancy of Canada.

Explaining that the former owners had almost 500 acres under cultivation, Roland said, "The land base doesn't have the capability to hold many cattle without seeding some of the agricultural land back into grass. So that's what we are doing right now."



The Bears began converting crop land to tame forage in 2001 when they seeded 100 acres of meadow brome, alfalfa, tall fescue and orchard grass. This forage was not grazed or hayed last year, but left standing to catch snow.

When I visited their new ranch on the edge of the Cypress Hills uplands, Roland and Sue were making plans for 2002 and enjoying the lull that comes before March calving season.

"We've got a mixture of cows - Hereford and Angus are probably half and half - and then we've got a few Shorthorns. We are deciding which are better this year, and then we will compare for a couple of years. Who knows, we might have an eclectic herd forever," chuckled Roland.

The Bears will continue their crop land conversion in 2002 by seeding an additional 160 acres to tame forage. They are also taking the bold step of restoring 20 acres of native prairie. Because the fields they are returning to grassland are within 3 miles of an active burrowing owl nesting site, the Bears qualified as a demonstration project with the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation (SWCC) with funding from the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program.

Neal Wilson, a SWCC rep based in Eastend, conducted an assessment of the Bear property. He also helped to recommend a mixture of native grass seed that contains 50% rough fescue, 25% northern wheat grass, and 25% western wheat grass. The native grass seed will be planted adjacent to existing native range that was used as calving pasture.

"We have fescue grassland in the grazing co-op on the other side of the road here," said Sue. "But the native grass on this side seems to have been used heavily enough so that the rough fescue has disappeared."

"We figure if it's growing over there, it should grow here," added Roland.

Over-grazing or early grazing of native range often results in the demise of preferred grass species like rough fescue. To avoid this

problem, the Bears intend to fence cattle out of native range and use crested wheat grass for spring grazing. Native grass will be reserved for fall grazing only.

Because restoring even 20 acres of native grassland is a fairly expensive proposition, Roland and Sue consulted a number of experts and sought advice from their native seed supplier: Prairie Seeds Ltd. based in Nisku, Alberta.

"No one has ever seeded rough fescue in this area, as far as I can tell," said Sue.

"What we will probably do with the seeding is pack the seed bed, seed in to it, then pack it again," said Roland. The 20-acre native prairie restoration site is now in grain stubble that was cut high to catch snow. "Hopefully, if the weather is on our side, it will take."

Both Roland and Sue credit the Sask. Wetland Conservation Corp. for jump-starting their crop land conversion projects. "The SWCC

project (grass seed purchase) will move us a year ahead of schedule for putting everything back into grass, which is very helpful," said Sue.

The Bears' long-term goal is to keep 50 cow:calf pairs on 800 acres of land. They will very soon have the land divided into a half section of tame grass for spring grazing and hay production, a half section of native range for fall grazing, and 160 acres of crop land for growing feed grains.

The land they have settled on is dotted with dugouts and small dams, and has a good well in the yard that has watered up to 150 wintering cattle. Wanting to improve their odds with surface water run-off, Roland and Sue took advantage of an open fall in 2001 to erect snow fences beside a few dugouts. Snow finally fell near the end of January and blew into their traps.

"We want to have a sustainable operation," said Roland. ■

## Environment Awards Presented

Thanks to prairie stewards across the province the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation was among three Saskatchewan groups to receive an award for their environmental work.

In all, 16 individuals and groups laid claim to a countryside Canada award, which recognizes those who promote the need to conserve wildlife conservation areas or use environmentally sound agriculture practices.

The Corporation was noted for its land stewardship programs, which encourage the conservation of wetlands, riparian zones and native grasslands. SWCC also promotes sustainable resource management.

Recognition was given to Peter and Sharon Butala from Eastend for the Old Man on His Back Prairie and Heritage Conservation Area. They are helping to conserve more than 4,450 hectares of native prairie grassland in southwestern Saskatchewan through a partnership with The Nature conservancy of Canada.

This area of the Cypress Uplands is one of the best remaining examples of native prairie in the province and is home to several species at risk, including the Burrowing Owl and Ferruginous Hawk.

Nature Saskatchewan got the nod for Operation Burrowing Owl. More than 400 program participants are helping to conserve about 60,000 hectares of prairie grasslands on private and public land in the province for the Burrowing Owl and other prairie species. ■



## Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*)

### Identification

This small, ground-dwelling owl is easily identified by its round head, white eyebrows, yellow eyes, and long, stilt-like legs. Adult owls are sandy-coloured and have barring on the breast and sometimes on the belly. Both male and females are the same size. The female tends to be darker brown than the male as she spends much of her time in the burrow incubating her eggs. The male, usually outside of the burrow during this period, is subject to bleaching from the sun making it a little lighter. The Burrowing Owl is almost always seen sitting on a fence post or at the entrance of a burrow. When flying after being disturbed it usually lands and "bobs" at the person or thing that disturbed it. For this reason it is sometimes referred to as a "howdy" owl.

### Present Status

In 1995, Burrowing Owls were listed as endangered by the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC) because of alarming population declines of 22 percent per year in the past decade and a shrinking distribution. Burrowing Owls are rarely found in Manitoba and populations on the Regina Plains in southern Saskatchewan have declined by 95 percent since the mid-1980s.

### Habitat Preference

Burrowing Owls prefer dry, open, treeless plains and pastures with short grass for nesting but will forage over areas with taller and denser vegetation, such as roadside ditches and areas near creeks and wetlands. Although the owls are associated with Prairie Dogs in much of their North American range, Burrowing Owls in Saskatchewan rely mostly on other burrows from mammals such as ground squirrels (gophers) and badgers.



### Range Map



Scientists are attempting to pinpoint wintering areas of this species by the use of radio collars. So far, owls have been discovered wintering in Texas and Mexico.

### Burrowing Owl Trivia

- These birds leave their winter grounds in March and April and arrive on their breeding grounds as late as May. While our Burrowing Owls usually rely on abandoned mammal burrows for nesting, Burrowing Owls in Florida usually excavate their own burrows and can dig up to 1.5 m per day.
- Egg laying begins two weeks after their arrival in Saskatchewan and incubation lasts for approximately four weeks.
- Once the young appear above ground, adults and young birds may move and use satellite burrows in addition to the nest burrow.
- Clutches usually consist of 6-11 (average nine) round white eggs that are a little smaller than ping pong balls.
- Young Burrowing Owls will often imitate the sound of a rattlesnake as a defense mechanism when intruders approach the burrow.
- Although Burrowing Owls are active near their burrows in the daytime, they catch most of their food after dark. Their diet is mostly mice, voles, beetles and grasshoppers.
- These owls may be seen throughout their range in southern Saskatchewan, particular on the Regina Plain, Moose Jaw Exhibition Centre, and in Grasslands National Park, in southwest Saskatchewan.
- Operation Burrowing Owl (OBO) is a landowner stewardship program delivered by Nature Saskatchewan that encourages conservation of grassland habitat for Burrowing Owls and other prairie species. Since 1987, OBO has enrolled 625 landowners in their program conserving 22,500 ha of private land and 39,000 ha of public land. OBO encourages people who see Burrowing Owls to call (the Hoot-Line) 1-800-667-4668.

## Converting to Tame Forage Helps Solve Salinity Problem

by Doug Elsasser

With almost 100 years of dryland farming experience between them, Ole and Esther Thronberg are ready to retire some marginal crop land.

The Thronbergs grain farm about ten miles west of Eastend in the brown soil zone of southwestern Saskatchewan. Their land is sloping or hilly and drained by water runs, draws and coulees. An occasional low spot or slough, sometimes ringed with willows and poplar trees, holds water through the summer.

"Some of this land has been cultivated for too long," stated Esther. She grew up on a small ranch just two miles south and has been married to Ole Thronberg for forty years. Together with their son Chris, who presently resides in Alberta, the Thronbergs have built up a farm that covers over 3200 acres, about 1200 of which is fenced native prairie rented out as grazing pasture.

"We have some areas on our grain fields that have salinity in the soil and don't grow very much," said Ole. "That's why we are in on this project of seeding some grass, to get better production."

The Thronberg project is one of several crop land conversion demonstrations with funding from the Government of Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program undertaken in cooperation with the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation (SWCC). As Neal Wilson, a SWCC technical advisor based in Eastend explains, "We pay special attention to landowners within three miles of active burrowing owl nesting sites. If these people have crop land they want to convert to tame forage, we can sometimes assist them by supplying suitable grass seed."

Ole and Esther have agreed to seed 20 acres of stubble to meadow brome and alfalfa. The very centre of the site, about two acres most prone to soil salinity, will be sown to creeping foxtail.

"We are going to rejuvenate the land that grows nothing but cochia and other weeds,"



Ole and Esther Thronberg

said Esther. "It should grow hay and give us some fall grazing after the hay is off."

Making the best use of land has been a constant theme for the Thronbergs. Their choice of where to draw the line between grain fields and native pasture is one reason why they have succeeded in this semi-arid district.

Despite federal government initiatives in the 1970s and 80s that encouraged farmers to break pasture for more grain production, the Thronbergs left their rocky hill tops and hill sides, coulees and lightest lands in native grass.

On fenced quarters where grain and pasture are combined, grain is grown in lower, moister areas most suited to cultivation. Once the Thronbergs' grain is removed, they allow custom grazing of the native range and stubble. Since grazing is deferred until late summer, and stocking rates are kept low, their native prairie - even in drought years, has remained in very good shape.

"We are not grazing to the very bone, and it does make quite a difference. At least our pastures hold snow," said Esther.

Having some extra grass around their yard

and nearby fields in 2001, Ole and Esther were able to help out a neighbour whose cattle were sent home early from the drought-stricken Reno community pasture near Robsart.

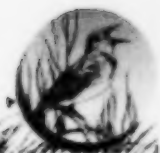
"We put up a portable electric fence on this half-section of crop and grass so the guy could run 65 cows and calves for almost two months. Some of the grass hadn't been cropped for 14 years and the cows trimmed it up really well," said Ole. Esther was glad to be rid of the fire hazard.

While not great believers in continuous grain cropping - preferring instead to seed 1000 acres and summer fallow about the same amount, the Thronbergs have started growing field peas and seeding cereal crops into the pea stubble. In 2001, with only 4 inches of rain, they grew up to 17 bushels of spring wheat per acre, 26 bushels of barley, and 19 bushels per acre of peas.

"Peas are a good price and they put nitrogen in the soil. The chemical fertilizer doesn't seem to work very well any more," said Esther.

While not yet close to retirement, Ole and Esther are looking forward to the day when their son Chris comes home to take over the





farm. Chris and his wife Tania, who grew up ranching near Drayton Valley, are planning to improve the cross-fences and raise a big herd of cattle on the Thronberg place.

"Chris likes the air and the scenery here better than up in White Court (Alberta)," said Esther. "He likes the forest too, but he likes the prairie best."

It's easy to tell that the Thronbergs are fun-loving people, happy to be where they are.

"That's my wildlife sanctuary," says Esther, as she points to a large, willow-ringed slough only a few hundred feet from her kitchen window. "Every year I put up a 'Goose Crossing' sign on the lane." The spot is favoured by nesting Canada geese, mule deer, sharp-tailed grouse, coyotes, jack rabbits and other wildlife.

Esther has introduced cattails to the wetland, both by seed and by root cuttings. She also feeds Hungarian partridge and songbirds in the winter, and allows great horned owls to roost in the hay loft. Around her house in the flower beds, Esther has arranged a remarkable display of shed deer antlers.

"Some of those deer had to rub their antlers on fence posts," remarked Ole, smiling. Trees are few and far between in this country.

Returning to the topic of crop land conversion, the Thronbergs are planning to seed more permanent forage in the years ahead. Chris will need the hay as their salinity problems are not getting any better.

"Do you realize that this land has been cultivated for close to 100 years? That's something our young people have to think about. Why can't we get more out of it? It's time for a rest, I think," said Esther. ■

## Eco-Extravaganza Hits the Road Again

By Krista Connick



Photo Credit: Lorne Scott

*Macro-invertebrate Mayhem – students from Caronport Elementary School dodge "pollution stress" as they race for the far end of the gym.*

Once again Eco-Extravaganza has been on tour! The Eco-extravaganza is a "Traveling Road Show" initiated through the Prairie Conservation Action Plan (PCAP). It brings together a number of conservation organizations to educate and entertain rural school children. This winter we toured the Missouri Coteau, visiting ten schools from Lucky Lake to Herbert. Highlights of the road show include the "Cows, Fish, Cattle Dogs, and Kids" Game Show and a visit with a live Burrowing Owl from the Interpretive Center in Moose Jaw.

SWCC hosts "Macro-invertebrate Mayhem", a fast-paced game of tag where the students become bugs in a stream and try to survive the pollution stress. We usually try to convince the teachers to help be a pollution stress, including sedimentation, run-off, and animal waste

(always a favorite with the students!) Eco-extravaganza is intended for elementary aged children, from Kindergarten to Grade Six, and features a range of activities. It teaches kids about native prairie, riparian areas, endangered species, habitat, and indicator species such as invertebrate bugs.

While on the road the Eco-extravaganza also hosted four townhall meetings to let producers in the area know about the programs different agencies offer. Although the evening meetings did not involve tag or team cheers, they were well received and we hope the producers found them worthwhile.

We hope to be on the road again next year, visiting a new set of schools, so watch for Eco-extravaganza coming to your area! ■

## Chaplin Nature Centre

A mild winter in Saskatchewan has made it possible to keep on working on the new addition to the Chaplin Nature Centre. Approximately 2200 square feet will be added to the building giving additional space for informational and interpretive displays, a small theatre, snack bar and more room for retail sales. The new addition is expected to be open by the spring of 2003. This project is the result of funding support through the Western Economic Partnership Agreement (WEPA).



Photo by Josh Bilyk

## Area Landowner Fences Marsh to Provide Better Water for Cattle

by Doug Elsasser

Cattle producers Dick and Diane Coombs have no intention of selling out and moving to British Columbia. In fact, the opposite is true. About a year ago they sold their established ranch near Vanderhoof and moved cows and equipment to land south of Wroxtton, Saskatchewan.

"This is not the Saskatchewan we envisioned," said Diane. She and Dick first came here in 2000 to visit friends in Yorkton. "We left Regina and headed up Highway #10 and were absolutely blown away with the way the land was! We were really, really impressed."

Seeing a lot of surface water and enormous potential for cattle production, the Coombs contacted a Yorkton real estate firm and were shown a number of farm properties. While visiting the Farm Progress Show on their way back to B.C. they were further encouraged to make a move.

"We were near Banff, driving along, and I said to my husband, 'Let's make an offer on that last place that we saw,'" said Diane. Dick had been thinking the same thing.

About a year later, in mid-April 2001, when all the land transactions had been made, Dick and Dianne said goodbye to family and friends and led a convoy of four cattle liners and three equipment transports through Prince George en route to Wroxtton.

Their cattle, 135 exotic-cross cows and calves, took a breather in Edmonton where they were unloaded and rested for 19 hours. A day later the herd was corralled in eastern Saskatchewan. Describing their tri-province relocation as a "neat experience," Dick Coombs estimates the cost at \$25,000.

One of the first problems the Coombs experienced on their new place was mud.

"After two weeks of being penned up, the cattle need to get out and have more room to move around," recalls Diane. "So we let them out into a 25-acre pasture east of the



Dick and Diane Coombs

yard. They had to cross part of a wetland to get to higher ground."

"The first and second day was not too bad but later the cattle were up to their bellies in

mud" said Dick. "We had to get them out of there because their udders get dirty, the calves suck the teats, and there are scour problems."

"But they had to stay. They were out there for another 10 days before we were able to ship them to grass," continued Dianne. "We just said, this will never happen again." The Coombs pledged to fence off the wetland and carried on with the work of building a new barn and shelters.

As luck would have it, Dick and Diane were soon visited by a representative of Ducks Unlimited (DU) based in Yorkton. Having studied aerial photographs of the area, DU was proposing to buy the 80-acre marsh adjacent to Coombs' yard. The offer was refused. Dick and Dianne wanted to retain ownership of the marsh, and were prepared to fence it at their own expense to exclude cattle.

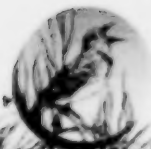
A few days later the Coombs had another visitor who explained that financial and technical support is available to landowners who want to improve their cattle operations and conserve wildlife habitat. This point was

### Prairie Crocus (*Anemone patens*)

is one of the first signs of spring. Its fuzzy blooms can be seen in late winter to early spring, before the leaves emerge. This drawing also shows the crocus in seed. Prairie crocus is not actually a crocus, it is an anemone. It has a thick, woody taproot that allows it to thrive in dry conditions. Crocus often flower profusely after a fire.



Drawing courtesy of J. Maywood, as published in *Prairie Wildflowers* (Currah, Smerciu and Van Dyck, University of Alberta, 1983).



made by Shannon Burnard, an employee of the Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation (SWCC) also based in Yorkton.

Ms. Burnard worked with the Coombs and Ducks Unlimited to develop a management plan for the marsh and surrounding fields. The cost-shared plan entailed exclusion fencing of the wetland, construction of rock and gravelled laneways for cattle to cross marshy areas, a solar-powered watering system used to draw clean water from a dugout inside the marsh, and conversion of crop land to permanent forage crops for hay and grazing.

"It's very compatible for Sask. Wetlands and Ducks and ourselves to work together on this project," said Diane. "It doesn't hurt the cattle, it's an enhancement."

The most expensive part of Coombs demonstration project is over three kilometres of barbed wire fencing around their 80-acre home marsh. From a wildlife perspective, this will increase nesting success of waterfowl.

Keeping their cattle out of the marsh also means less problems with animals getting stuck and cleaner water for drinking.

"Every time an animal goes in to drink, they bring up the bottom and have to drink dirty water. And invariably they get in the water and defecate. So there are lots of health benefits to fencing them out," said Dick.

The Coombs will install a solar-powered pump in an existing 16-foot deep dugout within the fenced marsh. The pump will move clean water to two 400 gallon troughs at the perimeter of the fence.

"Weight gain is also at issue here," said Dick. "If they are drinking clean water, you can get pretty near a third of a pound more per day on each animal." The Coombs will also install a windmill to help oxygenate the water and control algae.

Under their agreement with SWCC, the Coombs are allowed to graze cattle within the marsh fence anytime, but they intend to wait until fall when nesting birds have left the area.

"They (the cattle) just clean it up. They get rid of all the dead stuff, and at that time of the year they don't sink down. All the vegetation has gone to seed, so they don't hurt anything."

The Saskatchewan Wetland Conservation Corporation was also able to help the Coombs with crop land conversion. About 425 acres of former grain fields have been seeded to alfalfa, clover, timothy, meadow brome and other grasses. Various agencies, such as Ducks Unlimited and Sask. Agriculture and Food, have also contributed to this part of the project.

Diane also mentioned that the Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration (PFRA) had contributed one-third the cost of their solar-powered water system, and that SaskPower had given them a \$500 rebate for choosing solar-powered pumping equipment. "All of these things are available to everybody," she added.

Coming from another part of the country has given the Coombs a different perspective on land often referred to as "sloughs and bush."

"These wetlands are nothing but a Godsend to a cattle producer," said Dick. The 640-acre farm they purchased contains almost 200 acres of wetlands. "But for the grain farmer, you can understand why they want to do some draining and clearing."

To guard against the possibility that neighbours now or in the future may try to drain marshes that border their property, the Coombs have decided to place a Ducks

Unlimited conservation easement on their title. "As cattlemen, we are guaranteed that water by putting that easement on there," said Dick. He believes that DU has the resources to prevent wetland drainage on protected lands.

Along with the wealth of water, hay and grazing that their new cattle operation contains, the Coombs are delighted with wildlife in the area. "We had 11 pairs of geese that we saw right from the very start to the very finish," said Dick.

"They were so neat, starting out from tiny babies. And then you get to watch them as they begin learning to fly," added Diane.

The Coombs also bring some valuable new ideas to their Wroxton location. "My cattle have never had grain in 32 years, so why would we start now?" said Dick. "They don't need grain if they have good forage, and we feed good feed."

Not growing any grain means that the Coombs' best land is reserved for hay production.

"This area has fantastic cattle land with so much potential," said Dick. "We are probably going to expand to more land and 250 cows. It will be all close to home, which is wonderful."

For people who first set foot in Saskatchewan two years ago, the Coombs have settled in very quickly. ■

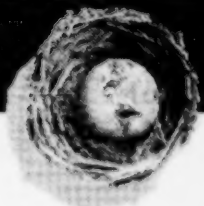
## New Updated Website

[www.wetland.sk.ca](http://www.wetland.sk.ca)

Take a look at our updated website featuring a wealth of information on management options to conserve native prairie, wetland and streambank habitat. The following management guides are available for downloading free on our site:

- Managing Your Native Prairie Parcels
- Streambank Stewardship
- Managing Saskatchewan Wetlands

We also invite you to download our "Native Prairie Update" newsletter.



**Check us out and let us know what you think!**

## Coming Events

### NATURE SASKATCHEWAN SPRING MEET

June 7 to 9<sup>th</sup>, 2002

Community Hall, Leader Saskatchewan

#### Friday, June 7

3:00-5:00 pm Bird Quest and Plant Quest  
Workshops

6:00-8:00 pm Registration Blue Jay  
Workshop

8:00 to 8:30 pm Welcoming Remarks

8:30 to 9:30 pm Guest Speaker -  
Alan Smith, "Riparian Woodlands of  
Southern Saskatchewan".

9:30 pm Hospitality Night Sponsored by  
Leader Tourism

#### Saturday, June 8

5:30-7:30 am Early Morning Bird Walk

7:00-8:00 Registration Breakfast

8:00 am to 12 Noon Field Trip to the Great  
Sand Hills and Great Sand Hills Museum

12:00-1:00 pm Lunch

1:00-5:00 pm Field Trip to Westerham  
Sandhills, Checkerboard Hill, Great Blue  
Heron Colony, Chesterfield Flats and  
Sagebrush Studio

6:00-7:00 pm Reception and Cocktails

7:00-8:00 pm Banquet

8:00-9:00 pm Opening of Leaders Link to  
the Saskatchewan Birding Trail -  
Ken Kessler

9:00-10:00 pm Speaker, Dean Francis,  
local wildlife artist and photographer

#### Sunday June 9

6:00-8:00 am Birding along the north side  
of the South Saskatchewan River

8:00-9:00 am Registration Breakfast

9:00-10:30 am Annual Meeting of  
Nature Sask.

10:30-12:00 noon Nature Sask Board  
Meeting

For more information contact Kerry  
Wrishko, c/o Leader Tourism, Box 39,  
Leader Sk. S0N 1H0

Saturday, May 11, 2002

### THE SASKATCHEWAN BURROWING OWL INTERPRETIVE CENTRE'S 3<sup>rd</sup> ANNUAL FUND RAISER

Moose Jaw Exhibition Grounds. Tickets are  
\$10.00 per person or a table of 8 for \$70.00.

The evening will include supper, penny  
parade, silent auction and live auction.

For more information call Heather Felskie at  
(306) 692-4682.

### NOCTURNAL OWL MONITORING VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Wayne Harris of SERM is looking for  
volunteers to help monitor species of  
nocturnal owls. Over the past three years a  
set of standardized survey protocols have  
been developed and adopted across  
Canada. These surveys involve listening  
for calling owls, after dark, along a  
predetermined route during the spring  
breeding season (March-April). Routes  
follow existing roads and involve stopping  
and listening (for two minutes) for calling  
owls at one mile (1.6 km) intervals. Surveys  
begin no earlier than ½ hour after sunset  
and must be completed by midnight.

If you would be willing to conduct a survey  
in your area or would like more information  
please contact Wayne at (306) 778-8218.

### Watch for our SWCC displays at the following locations:

- Forage Production Seminar, Saskatoon,  
March 13
- Farmers Day, Estevan, March 14
- Agri Mex, North Battleford, April 4, 5 & 6
- Ogema Trade Show, April 19 to 20
- Western Canada Farm Progress Show,  
Regina, June 19 to 21

More sites will be added as time goes on so  
check our web page under calendar of  
events frequently.

## Share Your Ideas . . .

Anyone with story ideas or coming events  
is welcome to share them with us at:

Attention: Lesley Hall

#101 - 2022 Cornwall Street

Regina, SK. S4P 2K5

Phone: (306) 787-0726

Fax: (306) 787-0780

Email: leshall@wetland.sk.ca

Web site: www.wetland.sk.ca

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- **Government of Canada** Habitat  
Stewardship Program for Species at Risk
- **National Fish and Wildlife Foundation  
(U.S.)**
- **Nature Conservancy of Canada**
- **Saskatchewan Environment and  
Resource Management** through the Fish  
and Wildlife Development Fund
- **SaskPower - Shand Greenhouse**
- **TD - Canada Trust Friends of the  
Environment Foundation**
- **Wildlife Habitat Canada**
- **World Wildlife Fund**